



The graduates of the Xavier University School of Medicine celebrate a momentous event

In the life of every doctor graduating from medical schools around the world but particularly in the United States, there is a special moment that stays with them always, and that is the White Coat Ceremony. The hosts for the presentation by the Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) located in Oranjestad, were Sukhi Brah and Eason Namasivayam, students of the school, and they explained the tradition and significance of this special event.

Established by Colombia University Medical School in New York, the placing of a doctor's traditional white coat on the shoulders of those that have completed the very demanding task of a medical education honors their determination and hard work. It is also a reminder of the responsibility now placed on their shoulders to their patients and humanity to serve it to the fullest. It is a proud and moving event for the graduates and their family and friends, particularly as was evidenced at the XUSOM ceremony taking place on the terrace of the Crustaceans and Steaks restaurant on Friday night, August 11. As reported by the Dean, Dr Gil Apicable, it is the seventh white coat ceremony since the school's inception, and the third since relocating in Aruba. Attending the event were a number of local dignitaries and the President and CEO of XUSOM, Dr. Cecil Bennett, who traveled from their home base in Atlanta to address the gathering. Also addressing the students and their guests as keynote speaker was Dr. Manaaf Badloe, Manager of Health Care for the AZV, Aruba's public health system. He admonished the students to "place the health of their patient as their first priority."

Receiving their white coats that evening were Nora Tucker, student body president, Lanna Nguyen, Mohamed Refaat, Navdeep Mangat, Thenesan Gurumurthi, Nimalan Ponnambalam, Mandeep Dhillon, Marie E. D. Joseph, Sonayyah Ahmed, Nikita Patel, and Amber Rayo.

Each graduate was given the choice of who would have the honor of assisting them in donning their white coats. Most chose family that traveled from far to witness this special moment. A number asked favorite faculty members, for whom they professed great admiration and gratitude. The pride and joy they were experiencing during this landmark event in their lives showed on their faces, and with the reverence in which they and their families performed this ritual.

Aside from their white coats, a number of the students also received certificates of recognition from Dr. Bennett and Dean Apicable and gifts from the school for exceptional academic achievement and community involvement. Nora Tucker and Lanna Nguyen received personally monogrammed blood pressure cuffs, for their continual concern for the welfare of the school and the students. Marie E.D. Joseph and Thanesan Gurumurthi and Sonayyah Ahmed took top honors for academic excellence, receiving monogrammed stethoscopes as a reward, presented by COO Kanaan Baroud and XUSOM administrator Zobaida el Ayoubi.

The graduating class of eleven students will all leave Aruba over the next week and travel to Atlanta to continue the process of becoming full-fledged doctors by performing their clinical rotations for seventy-two weeks. Marie Joseph of Brooklyn left the students still studying in Aruba with these words, "While you are at Xavier, the students and faculty here are your family, and you should treat them accordingly. You may squabble, like you do with your siblings, but you should all help each other and be there for each other when they need you just as you would your sisters and brothers."

Congratulations to the newest crop of doctors from the Xavier University School of Medicine, the staff of THE NEWS wish you all success in your future endeavors!